

## **League Calls on IRS to Stop Dark Money (NEW)**

LWVUS submitted comments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for 501(c)(4) organizations. The League believes that the IRS proposal is a tremendous opportunity to rein in the secret “dark money” that has been polluting our elections since the Supreme Court’s terrible decision in *Citizens United*. At the same time, the current proposal would significantly undermine the League’s ability to conduct truly nonpartisan voter service activities across the country – and this must be changed. Read the press release below:

## **League Calls on IRS to Stop "Dark Money"**

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### **LEAGUE CALLS ON IRS TO STOP “DARK MONEY”**

#### *Protection for Truly Nonpartisan Voter Service Essential*

**Washington, DC** – Today, the League of Women Voters of the United States submitted comments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for 501(c)(4) organizations. League President Elisabeth MacNamara urged the IRS to “keep pushing to stop the secret ‘dark money’ that has been polluting our elections since *Citizens United*, while at the same time protecting truly nonpartisan work to provide the public with unbiased voter information.”

“The League is commenting on the proposed new IRS rule for two critical reasons,” said MacNamara. “The health of our democracy demands that we rein in the secret ‘dark money’ election spending unleashed by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizens United* decision. The IRS proposal is a step in the right direction,” she said. “At the same time, any new regulations must continue to allow truly nonpartisan voter service activities by groups like the League,” according to MacNamara.

“Since *Citizens United*, our nation has seen a huge explosion in the sums of money being raised and spent by 501(c)(4) organizations – social welfare organizations – to elect or defeat candidates for public office,” said MacNamara. “This practice is not only contrary to the law regulating how much political activity is allowed by these organizations, but it is done in the dark. The money is not disclosed to the public, which leaves voters unable to judge the credibility and motivation of the advertising and campaigning by these groups.”

“Reforming IRS regulations is our best opportunity to stem the tide of secret cash,” MacNamara said. “The IRS can halt the abuse in its tracks by stopping 501(c)(4) organizations from spending on ‘candidate-related political activity.’ The League urges the IRS to move as soon as possible with a rigorous and clear definition of ‘candidate-related political activity’ which would be barred for (c)(4) organizations,” she said.

“However, the new IRS proposal is too broad, because it would undermine truly nonpartisan voter service activities like those carried out by the League,” MacNamara said. “We urge the IRS

to use the standards currently applied to (c)(3) organizations governing nonpartisan election activities and apply them to (c)(4) organizations as well,” she said.

“With nearly 800 local and 50 state Leagues, we conduct truly nonpartisan debates, publish unbiased voter guides, register voters of all political persuasions, and work actively in communities across the nation to encourage all citizens to vote,” MacNamara said. “In fact, in many communities, the Leagues’ voter information is the only truly nonpartisan information available to the public. Unbiased and nonpartisan voter service activities deliver tremendous value to voters, potential voters and our democracy. Thus we believe that truly nonpartisan voter service and voter education activities by a 501(c)(4) organization must be clearly and explicitly allowed,” she said.

“The League commends the IRS for addressing the dark money issue. They must fix that problem while protecting truly nonpartisan voter service and voter education activities. Though the IRS has been attacked from both sides of the political spectrum, we urge the IRS to do what is right,” MacNamara concluded.

**Contact:** Kelly Ceballos, 202-263-1331, [kceballos@lww.org](mailto:kceballos@lww.org)